

Early Help Multi-Agency Family Assessment

What is an Early help Assessment (EHA)?

It is important that when a concern is raised about a child, the right support is identified at the first opportunity. This is to ensure that concerns do not become more serious, making it more difficult to help the family make positive changes.

The purpose of a family assessment is to enable professionals from various agencies, such as teachers, family support workers or health workers, to make an accurate record of the needs of a child, young person or family. They are then able to put together an appropriate support plan for the family.

It is important that everyone in the family feels part of the assessment and support plan and understands why it's being done. This is because we want to work with families, ensuring they are part of the overall process.

How will the information be gathered to complete the EHA?

Professionals will use a variety of ways to gather information,

including speaking to other agencies, information supplied by parents/ carers, looking at attendance records, medical reports etc... observations and opinions are also a useful part of the assessment. You will be kept fully informed throughout of what information is being gathered and how it's being used.

Who will my information be shared with and why?

In order for the right support to be given it is important that the right people are involved. You need to agree your consent to the person undertaking the assessment for your personal information to be shared. It is normal to seek information and views from other agencies who may be involved in planning and arranging support services for you and your family.

Each family member (excluding children) will be asked to confirm their consent at the beginning of the assessment. If a family does not give consent an Early Help Assessment cannot be completed.

Your information will be stored securely. The Council takes its responsibility for storing and sharing information very seriously. For further information on data information sharing you can visit www.ecm.gov.uk/informationsharing

What if I'm not happy with what has been written about me and my family?

When children, young people and families are experiencing difficulties it is important that you feel able to discuss your worries with staff, who will listen and respect your point of view. It is equally important that your key worker is honest with you and your family, and is able to support you to make positive changes. The relationship you have with your key worker is therefore very important, if you do not feel that they are the best person to support you, then you should raise this at the first Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting to discuss whether a different key worker can be found.

You will be asked for your views throughout the assessment and there is also space to record your comments about what has been written. You should discuss anything which you are not happy about with your key worker.

Who will be invited to the team around the family meeting? (TAF)

Within six weeks of completing an EHA, it is recommended that a team around the family meeting is arranged. The purpose of this meeting is to develop a plan to support positive changes for you and your family. Your key worker will discuss with you the most appropriate agencies who should be invited to this meeting. A plan will be drawn up, and you alongside the various agencies will be responsible for developing the action plan.

It is recommended that the plan is reviewed between six and eight weeks, this will be dependent on each family circumstance. You may find that by the time you have the meeting, some of the actions will have already been completed.

Where will the TAF meetings take place?

This will depend on many things; some may occur in the family home, if this suits the family best. Others may be held in schools, Children's Centres or wherever best suit the attendees and the family.

What Happens next?

Once all actions in the plan have been addressed, the EHA will close. If in the future further issues arise, a new EHA can be completed.